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liant prettiness is sure to attract. It may not attract judges. Unfortunately the great majority, even of picture-buyers, and much more so of gallery or exhibition visitors, are not judges, and the picture attracts them, excites an undue attention, and effectually prevents its more modest neighbour from being seen and appreciated. True worth, the public may urge, is sure to find its place some day; and the saying is to a great extent true; but in addition to the evils with which genius has to struggle, and we have Johnson's authority for the line—

"Slow rises worth by poverty oppress'd,"

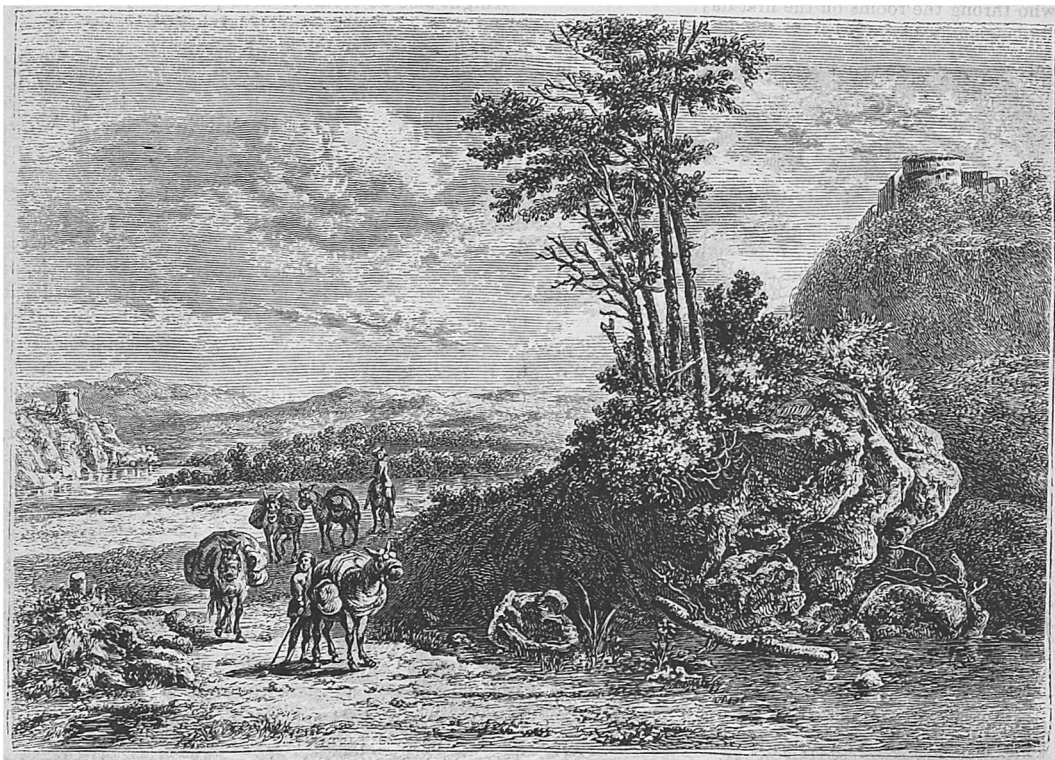
we need not load it with unfairness, and by that unfairness vitiate the taste of the public. Pictures of a very high tone, and of great brilliancy, should be hung in a room by themselves. Then the artists who sought, by meretricious ways, or by eccentricity, to jump into notice, would have the battle all to themselves; but it is obviously unfair, when a small historical picture of the time of the Puritans, whose chief

of being the nursing mothers of art, become but cruel step-mothers, who oppress it. Their true province is

"To foster talent young and shy,
To tender those, which else unfriended die."

And so far from doing it, most of these societies seem to exist for the purpose of affording excellent opportunities of display to those who are lucky enough to be members or associates of them.

The other causes of complaint against exhibitions, and things to be observed by those who frequent them, are of minor importance; but the complaints against the Hanging Committee are loud, long, and unceasing, and in every instance with which we are acquainted, most perfectly founded. The effect of their ignorance, or unfairness, is to negative the value of an exhibition both to the public and to the artist, and the sooner they take the advice which is solemnly written over the gates of the Dublin House of Correction, and "cease to do evil and learn to do well," the better for art.



ITALIAN MULETEERS.—FROM A PAINTING BY JOHN BOTH.

merit lies in its sombre and sober hue, is hung by the side of a brilliant sunset, set off by a red cloak, as bright as the robes of a cardinal. The one is no more to be seen than is a violet hid behind a peony. The eye is attracted by the brighter colour, which has a greater effect on the retina; the sombre picture is passed over; and the artist, who might deservedly have sold his performance, and have been cheered on his way by success, finds that he has nothing left but to paint so brilliantly as to outblaze his rival. It is certain that the hangers have as much to learn as the public on this subject. There is little doubt but that the numbers of pictures and the various sizes of the frames, must to a certain extent determine them, and they have also to reserve, which is most unfair both to the rising artist and to the public, all the best places on the line of sight for the pictures of the members of the academy, or the associates of the other exhibitions. Under these circumstances, meritorious artists rise but slowly. The exceptions to the rule, and Mr. Millais is the most brilliant of these, owe their happy fortune rather to an extravagant eccentricity or to some lucky chance, than to anything else. The Royal Academy, also, and the other bodies, chartered or not, instead

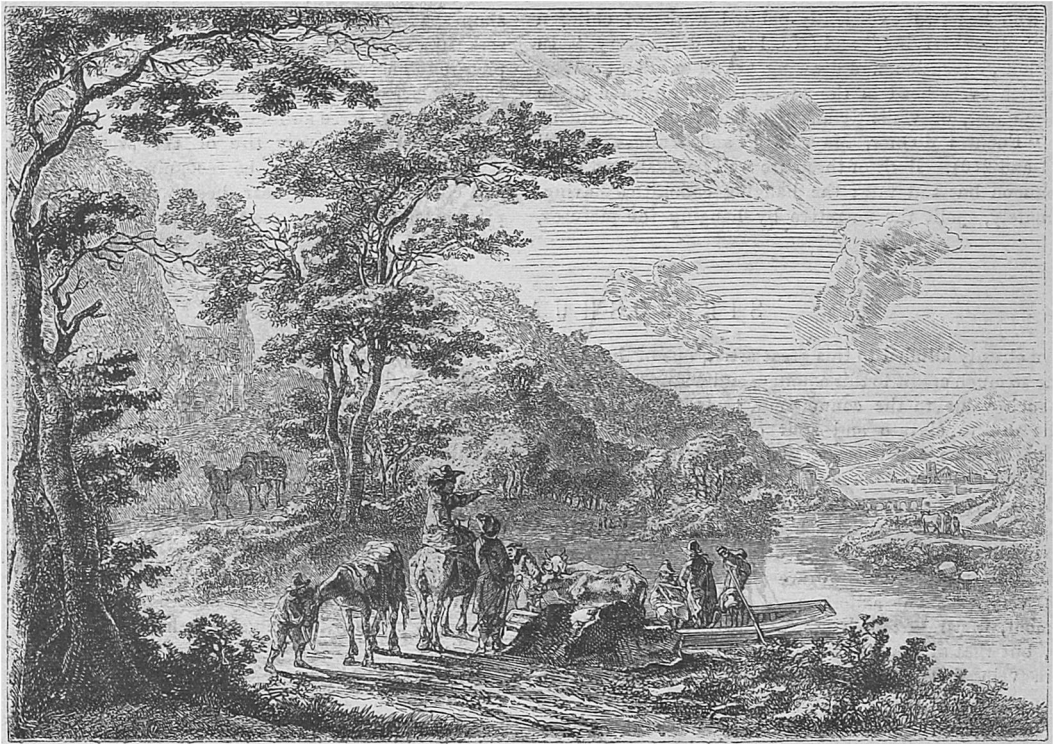
THE ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

THE successes of the Præ-Raphaelites and the strictures of the higher class of critics, and also, let us add, the very great prices now given, not to picture-dealers, but to the painters themselves, have given an impulse to artists which presses on one as a thing "not to be put by." There is now no doubt about the success of the English school; each year marks its course by some triumphant work; and not an exhibition opens, but has within it some picture of talent, sufficient, thirty years ago, to have made a reputation. That of the Royal Academy of this year, with which we have at present to do, is so much superior to those of the few years lately passed, that in academic history it is decidedly worthy to be marked with a white stone. It was heralded with a note of praise both long and loud; for somehow the performances of artists creep out into artistic circles, and are known and criticised before they are exhibited. Long ago we had heard of the great picture by Maclise, of the wonderful and quaint scene by Frith, and of the hiatus to be made by the absence of Millais. Long ago we had been told that the exhibition of

this year was to exceed its predecessors; but certainly we did not expect that in this case rumour would lag so far behind the truth.

Notwithstanding the brilliancy of the exhibition, some of the most brilliant exhibitors—to use a term of expression nearly amounting to a Hibernicism—are absent. There is no Mulready, no Dyce, no Herbert, no Millais, who may all be termed brilliant exceptions; and besides these absentees, there is also an absence of familiar names which cannot be regretted—we allude to the fact of the wholesale desertion of those books which “Mr. Punch” declared to constitute the painter’s library. “The History of England” is sparingly quoted from, “The Vicar of Wakefield” is laid by, and even “Gil Blas” and “The Percy Reliques” seem to have been passed over. From this arises a freshness of subject which is quite delightful. But we will no longer perform the office of button-holder, and keep the reader waiting; but, after having indulged in a private view, we will enter with him amongst the crowd of fashionables, artists, literati, and nobodies, who throng the rooms on the first day.

yard,” by Mr. Uwins, are two very indifferent pictures, which would never have made a reputation. Royal academicians sometimes exhibit very indifferent pictures. If Mr. Uwins had paid more attention to the painting and drawing of the mother in the latter picture, and had not given us the verbose and unnecessary quotation in the catalogue, it would have been more satisfactory, the subject being quite capable of telling its own tale. The dog is well painted, and the children very fairly executed; the flesh in the “Cottage Toilette” has a very disagreeable hue. There are several good portraits in this room. (No. 33) “My two Boys,” by Knight; “Martha, daughter of E. H. Baily” (No. 44), by Mogford; a picture which would be better in effect if the background had been cooler. Mr. Grant has some beautiful portraits, of which we think (No. 69) “The Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay,” and (No. 74) “Viscount Gough,” the best of the male, and (No. 353) “Mrs. Percival Heywood,” of the female portraits; the latter is very life-like and forcible, and the black silk dress is carefully finished. Sir J. Watson Gordon and J. P. Knight also do credit to their previously earned reputations;



AN ITALIAN VIEW AT SUNSET.—FROM A PAINTING BY JOHN BOTH.

In criticising so vast an array of pictures—and, by the way, we may mention that between four and five hundred were, *after being accepted*, not hung for want of room; therefore let young artists take courage—we may as well begin numerically, noticing those pictures which are most interesting, premising that we do not intend, like Mr. Ruskin, to abuse any of the public into an intense admiration of any pictures which they neither like nor understand.

In the East room we find (No. 9) “Cinderella,” a very clever and fanciful little picture, by George Cruikshank; the figure of Cinderella is not so good as the other parts of the picture. (No. 20) “Death of Francesco Foscari, Doge of Venice,” by Pickersgill, is in some respects a fine picture, but we imagine we have seen it before, there is such a sameness in the figures; the yellow-haired lady and the white dress we are sure are old acquaintances; besides this, the lady’s head is much too small. These are grave faults of carelessness in an artist of such evident talent as Mr. F. Pickersgill. (No. 25) “The Cottage Toilette,” and (No. 79) “A Cabin in a Vine-

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but Mr. Dicksee’s portrait of “A Lady and her Child” (No. 96) is decidedly the best female portrait in the room; the lady dances her child naturally and gracefully, and the silk dress is perfection. This is certainly the best picture Mr. Dicksee has as yet exhibited. “The Swing” (No. 50), by F. Goodall, cannot be too highly praised; for grace, action, and beauty of colouring, it is almost unequalled. The boy whispering to the little girl at the foot of the tree is quite a miniature cavalier. The park and distant country seen through the trees, prove Mr. Goodall to be a first-class landscape painter, and renders his picture one of the gems of the exhibition. The productions of Mr. Gale deserve honourable mention for their care, brilliancy, and finish, although their general effect is somewhat injured by an adhesion to the missal-like style of the Præ-Raphaelites. Thus in the “Wounded Knight” (No. 55), the ferns and wild flowers, amongst which he is lying, are of equal importance with the figure, and render the general effect glaring and confused: besides this, such minute finish is untrue to

nature, small objects being toned down, and the mind exercised upon the larger objects, prevents the retina from attending to the *minutiae* before it. No. 492, by the same artist, though in another room, represents a scene from "Cymbeline." This is equal in execution to No. 55, while more prominence being given to the figures, the picture is thereby the better of the two. The face of Imogen is refined, natural, and beautiful. "The Last of the Crew" (No. 57), C. Stanfield, R.A., is painted with this artist's usual brilliancy, and is the most touching and poetical sea-piece we ever saw. (No. 63), "Royal Sports on Loch and Hill;" the Queen, Prince Consort, and the Prince of Wales, the Viscountess Jocelyn, etc. —Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A. Of this picture it is difficult to speak, as it is unfinished, with the exception of the game, which is finely painted. In our opinion it ought not to have been exhibited in such a state. The Queen's face has a most extraordinary flush on it. Prince Albert's figure is most effeminate, while the Viscountess Jocelyn's large unnatural eyes have the appearance of blindness. (No. 360), "Dandie Dinmont," the Queen's favourite Skye terrier, is certainly not equal to Sir Edwin's earlier efforts. Mr. Webster has an approaching rival in a young artist of the happy name of Smith, who has two excellently-painted works of children (No. 70) "Blackberrying," and (No. 142) "Bob-cherry." In these, colour, execution, and drawing, are all excellent. War, about which every head in the nation is either turned at the present moment, or violently affected, has two illustrations, termed "Fuentes d'Onor, May, 1810, and August, 1811" (Nos. 71 and 210). Both of these are well painted, and tell a very common but sad tale; the hanging committee having, unfortunately, spoilt the narrative by hanging the pictures,

which are evidently pendants to each other, in different rooms. No. 85 a "Villager's Offering," and No. 104 a "Breakfast Party," are two highly-finished pictures by Webster. We may mention, *en passant*, that only the other day, a picture by this artist, which had cost a connoisseur only forty pounds some four years ago, sold at his sale for *three hundred*!

Mr. Leslie has three pictures, none of which can be classed as more than sketches, the execution being altogether slovenly, the drawing careless, and the colour crude. The principal of these is from Pope's polished court pastoral of "The Rape of the Lock," of which it cannot be called an illustration. Poets have, indeed, to complain of such pictures being foisted on their works. Who, for instance, would dream of the coquettish Belinda, surrounded by gnomes and fairies to do her bidding, when looking at the awkward and somewhat melancholy sketch in the picture of Mr. Leslie? The last picture which we shall notice at present, leaving for our next number a still greater treat, is a curious and beautiful illustration of modern "Life at the Sea-side," by Frith. A multitude of figures are seen upon the sea-shore, following all sorts of methods to kill time, which people at the sea-side generally indulge in. All classes are here represented, from children who use their toy-shop spades to dig in the sand, to the vagabond Ethiopian serenader who kicks and flourishes in the background of the picture. There is a great deal of the treatment of Hogarth about this painting—the same life, bustle, and vivacity; and if there is less force and knowledge, there is yet more prettiness. Few will easily tire of the present work of art. Amongst the crowd may be recognised the artist, his wife, and child. It has, we hear, been already twice sold, the last price given for it being one thousand pounds.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

WE have already alluded to this great artist, one of those who has done so much credit to this country, and whose productions are of such value to the connoisseur.* It is as much for what he did to elevate and spur on others to the noble emulation of fame and success, that we admire and love the great English painter. Before his time art was at a low ebb in England. We had taste to admire the productions of the Italian, Spanish, and Flemish schools, but we were not productive in art. It is a fallacy very deeply rooted in the minds of continental nations, that we are a very fine race of shopkeepers, very excellent sailors, very good at constitutional government, first-rate merchants, and deeply cunning diplomats, but that of fancy and imagination we have nothing. It is in vain that an Englishman, indignant at such an aspersion, points to the greatest poets and dramatists in the world, English born, whose works show fancy at its very highest point—it is in vain that we explain that romance writing, as an art, owes its very existence to this island. Though Frenchmen have sometimes heard of Shakspeare, possess a vague notion that one John Milton did exist, and are familiar with Byron—whom they claim as a Frenchman, Biron!—and Scott, yet still they stick to their old text, and deny us any taste, any fancy, any imagination.

Slowly and vaguely the idea is working itself into continental minds, that England is great in everything. Sir Joshua Reynolds is but one instance of the universality of our genius. It is difficult to explain the slow growth of art in this country, unless we seek for the cause in those religious and political troubles which absorbed every mind in the days of the first Charles and the great Cromwell, while under Charles II. the universal depravity of morals, the degeneration of king and people, and the narrow escape of moral extinction which we had at that time, must have prevented anything great or noble from making way above the surface of disorganised society.

The study of Vandeyck, and the appearance in England of Lely and Kneller, two foreign artists, paved the way for the

higher art, which soon was to be developed in Sir Joshua. Great indeed were the deficiencies of the British school when he arose. Its members seem to have been groping in the dark, conscious of power, of vigour, of energy; but, from want of artistic education, ignorant how to use it. Sir Joshua went the right way to work. He studied hard, gained a thorough knowledge of the elements of his art, and then went to the classic soil of Italy to complete his studies, and drink inspiration at the true fount of art. It was beneath the eye, as it were, of Michael Angelo and Raphael—at all events breathing the atmosphere in which they once lived, and gazing on their matchless works—that he gained such perfect mastery over his pencil.

High art is a phrase which is often used, never very accurately defined. Everything appears entitled to that epithet which elevates the standard of nature to sublimity. Reynolds did this with portrait-painting. He made it something superior, something greater than it had ever been before. It is probable, that had Sir Joshua enjoyed the advantages of a sound early education, he would have been as great in historical as in portrait painting. Here lies the weakness of most British artists. Generally speaking, they study nothing but the elements of their own art. While the foreign artist, especially the French painter, imbues his mind with general knowledge, studies history, anatomy, the intricate history of costume, too many of our own countrymen either cram for the occasion or fall into strange and painful errors.

This is notoriously the case with many living men, who, did they not wholly confine themselves to outline and colour, who, did they but elevate their minds by grasping that which expands and ennobles the intellect, might rise to original conception, instead of being eternal mannerists and copyists. A man will never paint well that which he does not understand. If he seeks to produce a Scripture subject, he must be familiar with all that learning and research has laid bare in reference to the age gone by. He must comprehend the climate, natural productions, costume, and *couleur locale* of his subject, or he never will be great. How admirable, how perfect, are

* ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE OF ART, vol. i. p. 146.